

National Native American Hall of Fame
2018 Inductee

LADONNA HARRIS
COMANCHE NATION



ADVOCACY
WOMAN OF INFLUENCE

Two 50-minute class periods

SELECTED COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS/SUBJECTS

History, Government, Literacy

CCSS Literacy SL 10-1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS Literacy SL 10-1d

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

CCSS Literacy WHST 10-4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS Literacy RH 10-5

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

GOALS FOR UNDERSTANDING

Students will understand

LaDonna Harris has made a significant contribution throughout her career as a political and social activist.

LaDonna Harris's achievements for Native people are numerous, and her influence among the halls of power in Washington D.C. reached all the way to the White House in the 1960's and 70's.

LaDonna's combination of intelligence, charisma, passion, optimism and wisdom represented Native women and Native communities in the best and most honest way.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Who is LaDonna Harris and what did she achieve to be inducted into the National Native American Hall of Fame?

Why is LaDonna Harris considered a "trail-blazer"?

What era of federal Indian policy did LaDonna influence?

What can we learn from LaDonna Harris to inspire us in our own lives?

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

Appreciate the achievements of LaDonna Harris.

Identify at least 3 eras of Federal Indian Policy.

Discuss amongst themselves the achievements and legacy of LaDonna Harris.

ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

Suggested Formative Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Active listening through note taking

Class discussion

Culminating Performance Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Students will write a one-page reflection on the career of LaDonna Harris and her influence on the eras of Federal Indian Policy.

ENTRY QUESTIONS

What role did LaDonna Harris play in influencing Federal Indian Policy?

What abilities did LaDonna Harris possess that propelled her through her career as Native American advocate?

Why is LaDonna's legacy significant today?

What work remains to be done on behalf of Tribal Nations?

MATERIALS

Computer and internet access to watch "LaDonna Harris: Indians 101" \$4.00 rental

Copy of the Federal Indian Policy Eras handout included below the overt instruction section.

LEARNING MODALITIES

Visual

Auditory

SITUATED PRACTICE

The instructor encourages the class to speak freely and openly about the issues and topics related to historic, as well as modern day politics. Students should feel empowered during the K/W/H/L portion of the lesson to share their opinions and beliefs. However, the instructor should also encourage students to withhold judgement on issues of which they may be under-informed. Having strong opinions without a solid basis in facts is not the academic model that is valued by scholars.

OVERT INSTRUCTION

15 - minute introduction: The teacher begins the lesson by distributing printed copies of the eras of Federal Indian Policy. The class will read together silently. Following the

reading, the instructor will initiate a classroom discussion about the policy eras. Some discussion prompts from the teacher could be some probing questions, such as,
“Why is it important to know and understand these eras of Federal Indian Policy?”
“What do the changing policy eras say about the U.S. relationship with Tribal Nations?”
“What era are we currently living in?”

Eras of Federal Indian Policy

Federal Indian policy establishes the relationship between the United States Government and the First Nations within the U.S. borders. The Constitution gives the federal government primary responsibility for dealing with tribal nations. Some scholars divide the federal policy toward Indians in six phases: coexistence (1789–1828), removal and reservations (1829–1886), assimilation (1887–1932), reorganization (1932–1945), termination (1946–1968), and self-determination (1968– present day).

Treaties

A treaty is an agreement between two sovereign nations. Since the federal government was the primary negotiator with tribal nations, and the procedure was to use the treaty making power of the president and the Senate to make formal arrangements. Over 200 treaties were agreed upon by 1840. Because they are agreed upon by all branches of government, the treaties are the highest law of the land.

Although all of the treaties have been violated by the federal government, nearly all of them remain in effect today and are of special importance regarding federal recognition of tribal status, hunting and fishing rights, rights to protection of sacred properties, rights to water and minerals, and land claims. The federal courts have a long, continuous history of litigation on these issues. The Supreme Court endorsed the procedure, with over 300 decisions referencing Indian treaties after 1799.

Allotment and assimilation era (1887–1943)

In 1887, the United States Congress passed the General Allotment Act, which is considered one of the earliest attempts aimed toward assimilation of Native tribes, or forcing the tribes to lose their

cultural identity and live like the dominant society. This period of allotment over tribal lands became known as the "allotment and assimilation era", because the main goal of allotting tribal land and sending native children to far away boarding schools was to destroy tribal communities and push native peoples into mainstream society. Tribal culture, language, song, dance, spiritual practices and other customs were forbidden to be practiced with the threat of imprisonment. Thus, assimilation became the epitome of federal Indian policy.

The BIA was used during this time to keep a commanding hold of all aspects of Native life, thus upholding the goal of "civilizing" natives.

The Allotment era resulted in the loss of over two thirds of tribally entrusted lands from 138 million acres (558,000 km²) in 1871 to 48 million acres (190,000 km²) in 1934. This was mainly due to leasing, and eventually selling, tribal lands to white settlers.

Termination and relocation (1945–1960)

Between the end of the Franklin D. Roosevelt era and the beginning of the John F. Kennedy administration, the federal government enacted laws to terminate the government's trusteeship of Indian lands and relocate Indians to the nation's cities. This policy was designed to fractionate tribal communities and eliminate Indian reservations permanently.

Tribal self-determination era

We are currently in the era of self-determination, which began with legislation in 1968. It was then that the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968 was passed. It recognized the Indian tribes as sovereign nations with the federal government. It also put an end to the policy of termination and relocation, with tribal governments being given more power to maintain their cultural heritage.

In the 1970s, laws began to change to help reverse decades of failed federal Indian policy. The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 allowed tribes to have more tribal control over federally subsidized programs for Indians, and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act in 1978, as well as the Indian Child Welfare Act that same year. The 1990's saw more significant laws passed to support tribal self-determination, including the Indian Gaming and Regulatory Act, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990.

CRITICAL FRAMING

Class watches *Indian 101: LaDonna Harris*. After 30 minutes, the teacher begins the K/W/H/L chart of Mrs. Harris. Questions and prompts are useful at this stage. “What did we just learn about LaDonna Harris?” “What else would we like to learn about Mrs. Harris?” “How can we answer those questions about her?” “How are the Federal Indian policies and eras related to LaDonna Harris?” “What can we assume about LaDonna Harris’s influence on the era of self-determination?”

30 – min: The class finishes the video on LaDonna Harris.

10 – min: Following the film, the teacher returns to the K/W/H/L chart and prompts the class to help complete the chart as a group. Again, questions and prompts from the instructor will help the class to fill the chart full of relevant information that was gleaned from the video.

10 – min: Students are given 10 minutes to write reflectively about the legacy of LaDonna Harris and the era of self-determination that we are currently in. Some writing prompts for students could be: “What were the talents and values that LaDonna Harris brought to Washington D.C. when her husband was elected to Congress?” “Why was LaDonna so beloved by her peers and so influential as an advocate?” “Do you think this is the last era of Federal Indian Policy, or will the U.S. return again to the policy of terminating tribes?” “How did LaDonna Harris’s story inspire you?” Students turn in reflections to the teacher at the end of the period.

TRANSFORMED PRACTICE

The “*LaDonna Harris: Indians 101*” video provides students with an opportunity to form opinions about many different topics, including the power of personal connection, race relations, Federal Indian Policy, the history of U.S./Tribal relations, and the future of U.S. Tribal relations. All students should be encouraged to think independently about the information provided in this lesson.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION FOR ADVANCED AND EMERGING LEARNERS

Students who struggle with higher level literacy may find the explanation of Federal Indian Policy difficult to grasp, therefore they should be provided with assistance with vocabulary and concept issues.

Students who demonstrate the skills and abilities to explore higher level knowledge should be provided more sophisticated written synopsis of the history of Federal Indian Policy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

LaDonna Harris: Indians 101 video

American Indian Law Resource Center, Helena, MT